

## BMTS Article Digest February – March 2016

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed in the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page of [www.bmtsonline.com](http://www.bmtsonline.com).

Scott

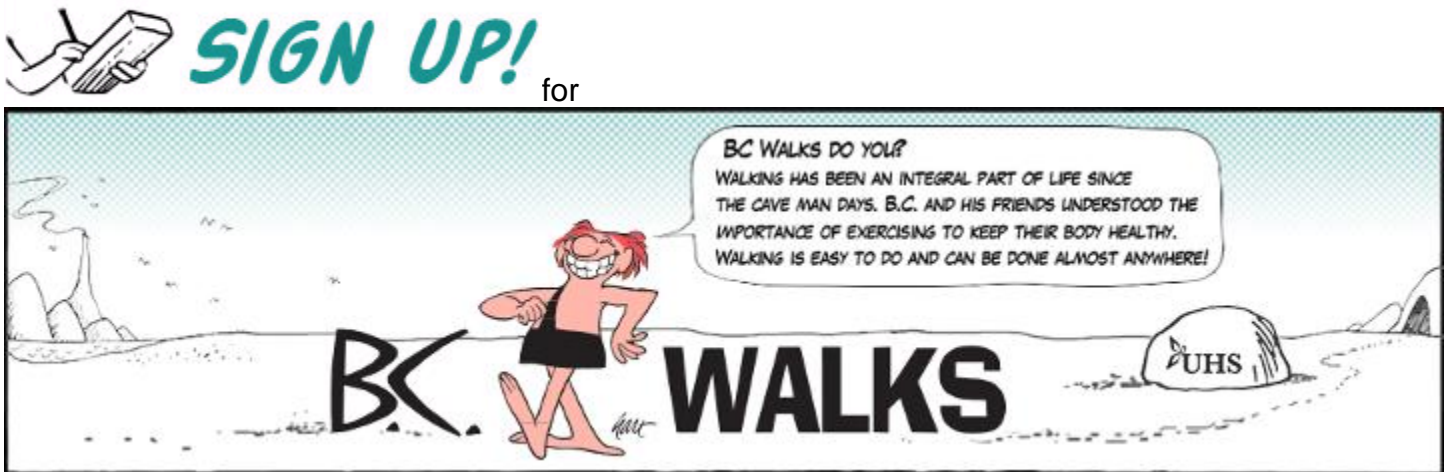


Take a look at the National Center for Bicycling & Walking's newsletter, **CenterLines**. You can also arrange to have it emailed directly to you.

See <http://www.bikewalk.org/newsletter.php>.

**CenterLines** is the bi-weekly electronic news bulletin of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking. **CenterLines** is our way of quickly delivering news and information you can use to create more walkable and bicycle-friendly communities.

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Go to [www.BCWalks.com](http://www.BCWalks.com)!

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Check out this website for Bike & Pedestrian Information!



[www.coexistnys.org](http://www.coexistnys.org)

In particular, view the interactive educational video clips.

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## **River to be highlight of tourism efforts**

February 7, 2016



Owego Mayor Kevin Millar is pictured next to a board that depicts the Two Rivers Greenway Project.

Thanks to efforts of the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) and several local municipalities, the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers will have new signage that will hopefully attract tourism, and heighten awareness of the area's great resource.

The Two Rivers Greenway Project was developed in 2012, and was an effort that former Tourism Director Stella Reschke collaborated upon.

The project consists of signage installation along points of the Susquehanna and Chenango River. The DOT will be funding 80 percent of the cost, with participating municipalities paying 20 percent of the cost, or \$6,000, according to Owego Mayor Kevin Millar.

Millar stated that the signage will let people know about the river, and will help promote it as a resource within the community. He noted that the project should come to fruition in six to 12 months, or the time needed to make the signs.

As part of the project, a new logo and interpretive signs to brand the Two Rivers Greenway will be displayed during the summer months at the Binghamton Visitor Center in the Roberson Museum and Science Center in advance of "Path Through History" Weekend (June 20-21).

The signage panels, created by HAAS Landscape Architects in collaboration with Synegraphics, will span seven municipalities and feature our History, Attractions, and Heritage.

A press conference will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 18 at the Binghamton Visitor Center to discuss the project and unveil the signs. Funded through the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study's Transportation Improvement Program, the signs will be on display during the summer season in anticipation of their installation this fall.

The Two Rivers Greenway is a regional multi-use trail system that extends from the Greater Binghamton Urban area to the Village of Owego. The system spans a portion of two counties and several towns and villages.

"Path Through History" Weekend offers an opportunity to learn about the story of New York and the role it played in our nation's history. Special events are planned at over 500 destinations throughout the state.

In Owego, some of the sites selected for the signage include Brick Pond, McMaster Street, Draper Park and the boat launch, among others.



## HUMANS

# Like Millennials, More Older Americans Steering Away From Driving

Updated February 11, 2016 2:45 PM ET Published February 11, 2016 4:53 AM ET

DAVID SCHAPER

A growing number of Americans are driving less and getting rid of their cars.

The trend is gaining traction in middle-aged adults, to the point where fewer of them are even bothering to get or renew their driver's licenses, but it's been prominent among younger adults — millennials — for years now.

"Honestly, at this point, it just doesn't really seem worth it," says 25-year-old Peter Rebecca, who doesn't own a car or have a driver's license. "I mean, I live in Chicago, there's really good access to, you know, public transits for pretty cheap."

The student at Harold Washington College downtown lives just a couple of blocks from a rail stop on the Northwest side. In the warmer months, Rebecca says, he uses a bike.

"I've got a bunch of grocery stores in walking distance, and even then I can use the bus if I have to get further," he says.

Rebecca is hardly alone, especially among young adults in urban areas.

"Over the past several decades, particularly for the youngest age groups, there's been a pretty large decrease in the number of people who have been getting driver's licenses," says Brandon Schoettle, a researcher at the University of Michigan.

He led [a new study published](#) by University of Michigan's Transportation Research Institute that studied the proportion of people with driver's licenses over the years.

According to the study, only 69 percent of 19-year-olds have a driver's license in 2014, compared with almost 90 percent in 1983. The percentage of 20-somethings with driver's licenses has also fallen by 13 percent over the past three decades, and fewer Americans in their 30s and 40s now have driver's licenses.

Susan Schell might soon be one of them. The manager of a Starbucks on Chicago's northwest side says her driver's license is up for renewal this month, yet she doesn't own a car.

"I used to. I got rid of it just because it's too much of a pain in the butt to have in Chicago, and we kept getting tickets and I just didn't want to deal with it," Schell says.

In addition to living in a city that is relentless in doling out parking tickets, Schell says, there's the cost of insurance, gas and maintenance on top of the cost of the car itself. Her husband recently let his driver's license expire because they take public transit to work, and they have other options for shopping.

"We use services like Instacart a lot," she says. "... If we've done, like, a big trip at Target or something, we just call an Uber. There's so many options when you live in a city."

Schoettle says now this trend is not just limited to teenagers and those in their 20s.

"For some of the oldest age groups, which had seen relatively large increases in licensing over the past few decades, finally seemed to have peaked and have started to show some small decreases in licensing," he says. "And so, for the first time in the series of reports that we've done, we've kind of seen a decrease in the percentage of people with a license across all age groups."

Forty-eight-year-old Raul Chavez hasn't renewed his driver's license since it expired more than a year ago — and he keeps his car parked.

"It's quite a bit expensive, because you have to have insurance," he says. "The latest two years, I use public transportation and I really enjoy it because it's cheap and it's reliable everywhere you're gonna go."

Schoettle says that's one of the main reasons more Americans of all ages are going without driver's licenses.

"There's been a shift publicly for people to move to things like public transportation that just wasn't there back in the '80s and '90s, partly because there's sometimes better public transportation in certain areas than there was a few decades ago, and a little more concern about the environment," he says.

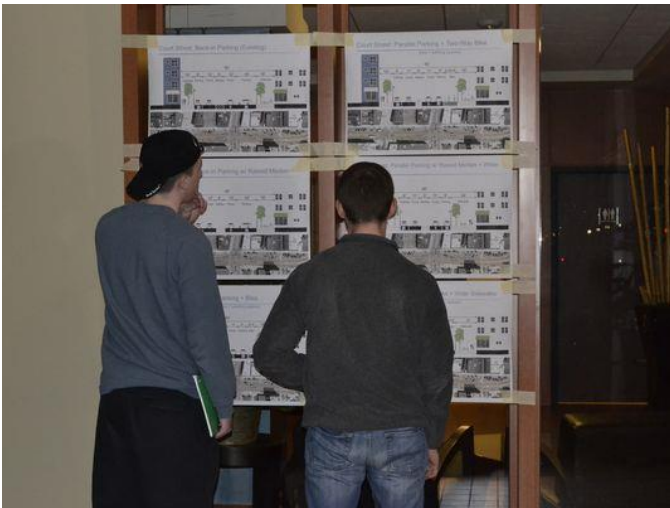
Schoettle says he'll be watching to see if cheaper gas might now reverse the trend.

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## How much will you pay to park in Binghamton?

**Megan Brockett**, 5:49 a.m. EST February 17, 2016

(Photo: MEGAN BROCKETT / Staff Photo)



A firm hired last year to conduct a study of parking in downtown Binghamton outlined its recommendations for improvements during a public meeting at the Metro Center on Tuesday, proposing changes to the city's pricing structure and the creation of more on-street parking spaces, among other things.

Nelson/Nygaard Senior Associate Lisa Jacobson said the firm found a clear mismatch between what the city charges for parking in various locations and where consumer demand for parking is highest.

This mismatch leads to frustration among parkers and contributes to a perception that parking in downtown

Binghamton is inconvenient despite the fact that adequate parking is available, according to the firm.

As a result, the firm is recommending the city adopt a demand-based pricing system that charges people more to park in spaces it found the majority of residents prefer, like the ones that line Court Street closest to the restaurants and other businesses, and less to park in the spaces it found most people said were less desirable, like the ramps.

Currently, the spaces along Court Street are free to park and have a 30-minute time limit, while the ramps cost \$1 per hour to park in.

Nelson/Nygaard is suggesting the city lower its hourly parking rates in the ramp to \$0.50 and make them free to park in on weekends to incentivize more people to park there.

It is also proposing doing away with the time limits for on-street parking spaces, which the study found people regularly abuse, and pricing the spaces based on their demand, charging \$1 per hour in areas like Court Street, for example.

"The point of demand-based pricing is adjusting that price, which may mean increasing it in some areas and lowering it in other areas, to get more availability," Jacobson said.



One of the most straightforward ways to increase the availability of high-demand on-street parking spaces is by creating more of them, Jacobson said.

The firm's study found there is room from about 300 additional on-street spaces in the core of downtown, including 50 on Hawley Street.



Some of the firm's other recommendations include replacing coin meters with kiosks that accept credit and debit cards to make payment easier, improving the appearance of the parking garages to make them more attractive to parkers and adding more signage around downtown that directs motorists to available parking options.

Nelson/Nygaard began the approximately \$100,000 study in June. The city and the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS) agreed to split the cost evenly.

The Collier Street parking garage, which the City of Binghamton has closed. (Photo: ANDREW THAYER / Staff Photo)

The geographical scope of the parking study stretches from the Susquehanna River in the south to the railroad tracks that run behind NYSEG Stadium in the north. The Chenango River makes up the western boundary of the study area, while the Susquehanna River and Route 363 comprise the eastern line.

Jacobson said Nelson/Nygaard is about 80 to 90 percent done with the project and looking for additional feedback from residents and other downtown stakeholders before submitting its final recommendations to the city.

A final report from the firm is expected by the end of March.

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## Ride the bus? Prepare for new routes

John R. Roby, 7:18 p.m. EST February 18, 2016

(Photo: File photo)



Broome County unveiled sweeping changes to its bus system Thursday, a move designed to re-align public transit with 20 years of demographic shifts and save almost a half-million dollars annually.

The largest overhaul in nearly two decades will affect nearly all of B.C. Transit's current 20 fixed routes, and stems from a \$170,000 study by Florida-based TransPro Consulting that Broome entered last spring and then extended in December. TransPro was founded in 2011 by CEO Mark Aesch, who is credited with reversing declines in the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority during his tenure as CEO with that agency in the

mid-2000s.

In October 2015, TransPro contributed \$2,500 to Broome County Executive Debbie Preston's campaign committee, according to filings from the New York State board of elections. That was only the second contribution in the state since the company's founding. It gave \$1,000 to Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren in 2014, records show.

Broome officials described many of B.C. Transit's current routes as legacies of a bygone economy. For instance, its buses stop 35 times a day at or near the Glendale Technology Park in Endicott, where IBM employed more than 3,500 before closing the 14-building campus in 1994.

Many of those buses now run almost empty, according to TransPro data, while other routes fill and leave potential riders on the curb.

"The savings is a nice byproduct of enhancing our system," Public Works Commissioner Dan Schofield said. "Our initiative was to make this a better service than we have today."

The new routes are scheduled to begin Feb. 29, and the changes will initially affect weekday service only. New route maps will be available on the [B.C. Transit website](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/transit/routes), [www.gobroomecounty.com/transit/routes](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/transit/routes), Friday.

Public Transportation Commissioner Greg Kilmer said riders, once they adjust, can expect faster and more frequent trips on most routes.

"We're going everywhere we went before, we're operating the same hours or more, and we're improving service in many areas," he said. "We're not fixing what wasn't broken, but at the end of the day, this will result in good economies."

To build its recommendations, TransPro collected ridership and travel data over the past eight months to produce a "trip score" for each of B.C. Transit's fixed routes. Those routes with a low trip score — like the Route 59 West Corners Shuttle, whose average 30 daily boardings earned it a 3 — were combined with another route. Those with high scores — like Route 12 Conklin Avenue, with 607 daily boardings for an 18 — were kept or, in some cases, extended.

"It's hard for somebody to look at this and not be afraid of a change, whether it's a customer looking at service or an employee who's had it this way for a long time," Kilmer said. "But at the end of the day, the best service we can have is the one that's still running. This is going to improve our financial solvency for the long run."

Among the planned changes:

**Routes 23 (Westside) and 57 (Shoppers Special).** These routes will be combined, at the same frequency, on weekdays. Daytime service will be extended two hours, to 7 p.m. Broome expects this will save about \$250,000 annually.

"Students are going two places, the Town Square/Target area and the Oakdale Mall area, then back to campus, but they're not free until after 5 p.m.," Kilmer said. "So we're adding two hours of service here."

**Routes 35 (Binghamton-Endicott), 55 (Endwell Shuttle) and 59 (West Corners Shuttle).** B.C. Transit will operate three versions of Route 35 after the change. The main will go only as far west as Washington Avenue, saving the 40-minute loop to Glendale. 35 Watson will pick up that and the former Endwell Shuttle route, and the 35 Express will hit only the most popular stops, to Glendale, and loop through West Corners. Most riders — those

along the main Binghamton-Endicott corridor — will see a jump in frequency from 40 to 20 minutes, Kilmer said. Broome expects \$170,000 in savings from the changes.

**Routes 3 (Park Avenue) and 40 (Chenango Street).** These routes will operate as before during commuting hours, and will be “interlined” in midday — one bus will alternate each route on different trips. Most riders, the study found, took them to get to and from work. In addition, the routes will add two stops in the Binghamton General area, one at the dialysis center. Savings are expected to be about \$80,000.

In addition to savings from maintenance and fuel, Broome expects capital costs will decrease as it drops from 44 buses to 36.

None of the 44 full-time or 19 part-time drivers will be laid off or shifted in status, Kilmer and Schofield said. Overtime costs are expected to decline, which figures into the projected \$470,000 annual savings.

“We’re paying a lot of overtime, and we’re not operating efficiently,” Kilmer said. “The bigger plan is that overtime should largely go away, and our cost per mile will go down.”

Further changes may be ahead. The county’s contract with TransPro was extended through this fall. The company has previously proposed public-private partnerships and cost-sharing arrangements, which Kilmer said are still being studied.

During the presentation of the route changes, legislators questioned the planned rollout of the new routes. The 10-days notice period, Kilmer said, is about average for a transit overhaul of this type. Transit will have staff at the downtown transfer center handing out maps and answering questions. Phone calls to transit’s helpline, 607-778-1692, will ring to operators who will help riders as well.

Dan Reynolds, chairman of the legislature, asked transit to return and present once ride survey data on the changes are collected.

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February 24, 2016

Association of Pedestrian & Bicycle Professionals

## He's #1!



*Jim Ercolano, Pedestrian Specialist of NYSDOT's Office of Traffic Safety & Mobility has the distinction of being member #1 in the APBP member database. Below are Jim's thoughts on APBP and active transportation.*

As one of the founding members of APBP, our goal was to elevate non-motorized travel as an essential human/civil right, warranting development of best practices (through AASHTO, TRB, NCHRP, etc.), and quality professional development and training opportunities. For nearly 2 decades, my APBP-related contacts, info exchanges, and training have been invaluable.

With traffic deaths rising again, I encourage our members to not view new technology as an easy panacea for issues that are primarily related to traffic safety culture (TSC). Complete Streets, Vision Zero, and other systemic safety approaches require that we venture outside our traditional “comfort zones” and adopt new transportation paradigms to save many more lives.

## **Make e-bicycles legal in NY**

**JOE MARTENS AND PAUL WINKELLER**

As spring approaches, millions of New Yorkers are oiling their chains and pumping up their tires, getting ready to ride their bikes for fun with friends and families, and ride to work, errands and events.

But only traditional bicycles, not electric or “ebikes,” will hit the pavement this year unless the state legislature and Gov. Andrew Cuomo act.

Unlike 21 other states, riding an e-bike in New York is illegal because of an outdated provision in New York’s Vehicle and Traffic Law. Ironically, it is legal to sell e-bikes, as this is governed by federal law, but illegal to ride them, which is governed by state law.

Electric bicycles are perfect not only for people looking for a car substitute, but for senior citizens, parents with children, and people with physical limitations, because they provide increased mobility and an alternative transportation choice.

For the purposes of federal law, electric bicycles are consumer products that have been regulated identically to traditional bicycles since 2002, when federal law distinguished bicycles with low-power electric motors capable of reaching speeds of 20 mph or less, or electric bicycles, from motorcycles, mopeds and motor vehicles. New York State’s law was never updated to conform to the federal standard and, consequently, electric bicycles are regulated like motorcycles, even though they are quiet, low-speed and emissions-free.

New York state is missing a golden opportunity, but fortunately, the governor and the legislature are considering legislation to fix this outdated law.

Electric bicycles operate nearly identically to a traditional human-powered bicycle, but are easier to pedal, with assistance from a small, pedal-activated electric motor. Bicycle riding of all forms improves the state’s air quality, reduces traffic and parking congestion, reduces health care costs by improving personal health and is simply a great way to get around. Allowing e-bikes on the road would expand these benefits.

It also would be a boost for New York’s small businesses. More than 200,000 e-bikes were sold in the U.S. in 2015, and this number is expected to increase by 10 percent annually. Bicycle retailers across the state, usually small-business owners, would realize a significant increase in sales and revenue if the prohibition on riding e-bikes was lifted. And given the size of the potential New York e-bike market, lifting the e-bike ban could even entice a major manufacturer to locate here. E-bikes also would enhance visitation to, and enjoyment of, tourist destinations like state parks and the canal trails from tourists inside and outside of the state.

It’s time to bring New York’s electric bicycle laws into the 21st century. Promoting and expanding the use of bicycles, including e-bikes, is good for the environment, good for public health and good for the economy.

*Joe Martens is the former commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and currently a senior fellow at the Open Space Institute. Paul Winkeller is the executive director of the New York Bicycling Coalition.*

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# Early data suggests pedestrian deaths surged in 2015

Published March 09, 2016

Associated Press

Pedestrian deaths surged by an estimated 10 percent last year as the economy improved, the price of gas plunged and motorists put more miles behind the wheel than ever before, according to an analysis of preliminary state traffic fatality data.

The growing use of cellphones distracting drivers and walkers may also be partially to blame, states a report released by the Governors Highway Safety Association, which represents governors' highway safety offices. Warmer weather and shorter winters along with a greater awareness of health benefits may also be encouraging people to walk more.

"This is really sobering news," said Richard Retting, co-author of the report. "Pedestrian safety is clearly a growing problem across the country."

The data analyzed were from the first half of 2015. If the trend holds true for the full year, it would be the largest year-to-year increase in pedestrian deaths since 1975 when the current federal system for recording traffic deaths was created.

The report is based on state traffic fatality figures, extrapolated for the full year by researchers at Sam Schwartz Consulting, which specializes in transportation matters.

There were 2,368 pedestrians killed in the first six months of 2015, compared to 2,232 during the same period in 2014 — a six percent increase. Researchers arrived at a 10 percent increase for the entire year by factoring in that fatalities for the first half of the year are typically underreported, and that for at least the last five years an average of 25 percent more pedestrian deaths were recorded in the second half of the year, which includes warmer summer months, Retting said.

Total traffic deaths, which had been trending downward for the past decade, were also up an estimated 8 percent last year. But pedestrian fatalities have been rising since 2005, and now account for 15 percent of total traffic deaths. The last time pedestrian deaths accounted for that large a share of traffic deaths was 25 years ago.

Nearly three-quarters of pedestrian deaths occur after dark, and a third of those killed had been drinking alcohol, according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data. By comparison, about 15 percent of motorists involved in those crashes had a blood alcohol content at the legal limit or higher.

Four large population states — California, Florida, Texas and New York — accounted for 42 percent of the pedestrian deaths in the first six months of 2015. States with the highest rate of pedestrian fatalities per 100,000 residents were scattered across the country — Florida, 1.35; Arizona, 1.27; Delaware, 1.27; South Carolina, 1.12; Mississippi, 1.07; Oregon, 1.04, and New Mexico, 1.01. The District of Columbia also tied Oregon for the sixth highest rate, 1.04.

In a related issue, the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents city bus drivers, estimates that roughly one pedestrian is killed every 10 days by a city bus because of blind spots in poorly designed buses. Wide "A pillars," which connect the windshield to the driver's side window, and poorly placed side mirrors frequently obstruct drivers' view of intersections, according to the union.

"Until the industry demands a change in the design of buses to remove the unnecessary blind spots like European buses, people will continue to die in these preventable accidents," said Larry Hanley, the union's president.

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## URL

<http://www.foxnews.com/leisure/2016/03/09/early-data-suggests-pedestrian-deaths-surged-in-2015/>

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